

FOR THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

October 16, 2007

**Statement of Representative Pete Stark
In Support of Freedom of the Press**

MR. STARK: Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of freedom of the press and an informed public.

The Free Flow of Information Act (H.R. 2102) is a straightforward bill that will protect journalists from being legally obligated to disclose their confidential sources of information. This will allow sources to speak more freely, allowing for the vibrant exchange of important information between reporters, their contacts and the public.

Predictably, George Bush's Department of Injustice opposes today's legislation, in part because the Administration issued more than 300 subpoenas last year alone. That's understandable. If I had a track record of wasting money on a failing war, abusing civil liberties, suppressing scientific research, and failing to enforce important consumer protections and environmental regulations, I too would want to keep the press and the public in the dark.

But it is also despicable. Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia already recognize a reporter's privilege to keep confidential sources, and to do so without risking interrogation or prosecution. A federal media shield law would further protect the public's right to know about corruption, waste and mismanagement in and out of government.

In the past few years, journalists have depended on confidential sources to inform them about the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, the disclosure of CIA prisons in Eastern Europe, and the President's warrantless wiretapping program. If we left it up to the administration to decide what went into news stories, we would have headlines that told us the war in Iraq is a smashing success and that Dick Cheney's hunting technique is unparalleled.

The Constitution guarantees the right to a free press. That freedom depends on not having to

worry about being punished for revealing information that the public has a right to know. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of this bill.